

THE TIME TRAVELLER

A three-minute monologue

By JANE CAFARELLA

CONSTANCE, 60+ is telling her friend about a recent lunch date.

The other day, I went out for lunch...you know that little place on the corner, the one with the blue and white awning?

The waitress came up – finally!

Tattoos! A thong! I try not to judge, but...

She purses her lips and raises her eyebrows.

“Just yourself?” she says.

“Two!” I say, smiling at Lavinia.

“You guys want lunch?” she says, plonking the menus, a flask of water and two glasses on the table.

And I know I shouldn’t – but I just can’t help myself.

“No guys here,” I say, and I wink at Lavinia.

“Whatever!” the waitress says, and she rolls her eyes. “Ready t’order?”

“Do you have any manners?” I ask, scanning the menu. “Some manners would be nice, don’t you think, Miss Lavinia?”

And Lavinia winks back.

“I don’t know where you come from, *Lady*,” the waitress says, “but around here, good manners means not being rude to staff.”

So, I tell her what she needs to know. (*politely, grandly*)

“I come from another time.

“I come from a time when people were ‘ladies and gentleman’ not ‘guys’.

“I come from a time when only sailors and prisoners had tattoos.

“I come from a time when women wore stockings and petticoats, gloves and face powder and men wore ties and jackets, and tipped their hats, and gave up their seats, and called you Madam, or Miss or Mrs.

She shakes her head.

Oh, dreadful things still happened...behind closed doors. (*Softly, emotional*) But now they happen everywhere, and we know everything... and we can’t do anything about it, because we have all the shame and none of the power! And nobody knows that it was different once.

Unless they’re from another time. Like me. And Miss Lavinia.”

Beat.

I hand back the menu. “I’ll have the fish – thank you.”

“And your friend?” the waitress asks. And she looks right through Miss Lavinia most rudely!

Lavinia winks again.

“Miss Lavinia isn’t hungry today,” I tell her.

And the waitress stares at Miss Lavinia and then back at me and back at Lavinia again.

“So just the fish?” she says, and something in her voice tells me she understands. Finally!

Brightening.

And when she comes back, she brings the fish, two glasses of wine, and a little chocolate mousse with two spoons.

“On the house,” she says.

She picks up one glass of wine and sips. A tiny grin escapes.

Works every time!

374 spoken words

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